

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 CU-02 SCCT-01 SY-05 SAM-01 AF-06

EB-07 AID-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 SAJ-01 /108 W

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R 070204Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2736

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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TAGS: PINS, AS

SUBJ: VISIT OF ARAB STUDENT LEADERS MARKED BY VIOLENCE

1. SPONSORED BY AUSTRALIAN UNION OF STUDENTS (AUS), TWO LEADERS OF PALESTINIAN YOUTH GROUPS MADE PUBLIC APPEARANCE MAY FOURTH AT BEGINNING OF MONTH-LONG TOUR OF AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES. PREDICTABLY, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY JEWISH STUDENTS (MUJSS), FORMED PICKET LINES OUTSIDE THE AUS OFFICE, WHERE PALESTINIANS WERE MEETING AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS. ALTHOUGH JEWISH DEMONSTRATORS WERE ACTING IN RELATIVELY QUIET FASHION, THEY WERE SUDDENLY ATTACKED, ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS, BY ABOUT ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZERS (PLO) SUPPORTERS, MANY WEARING FORM OF ARAB HEAD-DRESS AND CARRYING WOODEN BATONS.

2. AS RESULT OF FRACAS, THREE STUDENTS AND ONE ELDERLY BY-STANDER WERE TAKEN TO HOSPITAL WITH CUTS AND HEAD INJURIES. MELBOURNE POLICE INVOLVED, CHARACTERISED DEMONSTRATION AS "MELBOURNE'S MOST VIOLENT AND BLOODIEST OVER MIDDLE-EAST ISSUE".

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3. PALESTINIAN STUDENTS ARE EDDIE ZANANIRI TWENTY-EIGHT, AND SAMIR CHEIKH, TWENTY-THREE, BOTH FROM BEIRUT. THEY WERE ISSUED VISAS BY GOA UNDER ITS SO-CALLED "EVEN-HANDED POLICY TOWARDS MIDDLE EAST", IN ORDER TO VISIT AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES TO PRESENT PALESTINIAN CASE.

4. ON MAY FIFTH AND SIXTH PALESTINIANS VISITED MELBOURNE CAMPUSES AT MONASH UNIVERSITY AND LATROBE UNIVERSITY, CAUSING JEWISH STUDENTS TO TURN OUT IN HUNDREDS, BUT EACH VISIT, WHILE NOISY, WAS NOT MARKED BY VIOLENCE.

5. AUS OFFICIALS AND RANKS ARE SPLIT ON ISSUE OF VISIT, SINCE, DURING PAST MONTHS, MANY AUS UNITS HAVE VOTED AGAINST INVITATION ISSUED BY NATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE. ON MAY FIFTH, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SECRETARY OF AUS, MICHAEL DANBY, RESIGNED HIS POSITION, "IN DISGUST OF RACIST ATTITUDE OF UNION". DANBY IS QUOTED FURTHER AS SAYING: "IT'S A BAD DAY FOR AUSTRALIA AND STUDENTS WHEN PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS DISAGREE WITH ACTIONS OF AUS AND ARE ASSAULTED BY THUGS. IT IS EVEN WORSE WHEN AUS OFFICERS ARE USED TO HARBOUR PLO ASSAILANTS ARMED TO TEETH WITH CLUBS, STICKS AND OTHER CRUDE WEAPONS".

6. AUS FEDERAL PRESIDENT, IN SEPARATE STATEMENT, DISCLAIMED IDEA THAT NATIONAL BODY HAD ANY PART IN MAY FOURTH VIOLENCE.

7. MELBOURNE MEDIA REPORT THAT ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PLO SYMPATHISERS WERE "BREAK AWAY" FROM MAY DAY PARADE, WHICH WAS MARCHING THROUGH IN TRADITIONAL MELBOURNE CELEBRATION. AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNION PRESIDENT, BOB HAWKE, TOLD LABATT, MAY FIFTH, THAT HE HAD WARNED GOA, THAT IF IT ISSUED VISAS TO PALESTINIANS, VIOLENCE WOULD INEVITABLY FOLLOW. HAWKE, WELL KNOWN FOR PRO-ISRAELI SYMPATHIES, HAS BEEN VIGOROUS OPPONENT OF GOVT SO-CALLED "EVEN-HANDED" POLICY, AND SINCE INCIDENTS, STARTING MAY FOURTH, HAS PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY ATTACKED PRIME MINISTERS FOR GOVT'S PRO-ARAB TENDENCIES.
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